

Village Character Forum, May 15, 2010

Cold Spring Special Board for a Comprehensive Plan

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Notes on two sessions of Whole Village/Village Character discussion at VFW Hall, May 15

Session 1 – 5 people attended

1. Walkability

Walkability is important. But some of street lighting is not very good; very scary

Whole area is very dark sometimes. The Railroad area too. It's scary. Improve lighting but keep the historic character.

That's pitch black. I'd like to be seen -- Lunn Terrace area

I've seen people walking down train tracks. People jumping up "peeping into cars".

Consensus from the table – people would like to see more police visibility at night especially when trains arrive and depart.

One couple remarked that they had a man knocking on their door at 2am after he was attacked at the railroad station.

Morris Avenue is dark and needs increased lights from Craigside to Whitehill

2. Sidewalks

They're really not at all to code.

You really can't get a wheelchair or stroller across streets.

Furnace Street sidewalks need repair.

Curb cuts and consistent heights (at curbs) would enhance sidewalks.

My dog actually sprained his paw on potholes. We also need to keep up the verge between sidewalk and street.

And residents need to keep their sidewalks clear of snow and ice in the winter

There are hazards on Church Street with the heavy traffic. I'd like to have speed bumps installed on the street.

The same thing happens on Furnace Street. It seems we have rush hour traffic there.

2B. Missing Sidewalks.

Absolutely. Where there isn't a sidewalk, there should be.

Especially in areas such as Yannitelli's parking lot.

Also the part of Route 9D up toward Little Stony Point.

Sidewalk paving was never finished on parts of Church Street after the street was re-curbed.

It's a disaster walking on Marion Avenue, walking behind Foodtown.

Consensus – Walkability is very important. This diversion into the safety aspects [at this meeting] -- that could enhance walkability.

3. What makes people feel safe?

Knowing people, trust, social contract

With only one state road (9D), cars do not stop in the village; there are no obvious bars or roadhouses.

But there is a 24-hour gas station that sells beer and it gets a lot of traffic

Also, overall access to the village is limited; few roads in or out.

The physical characteristics of the village are an important contributor to security and the feeling of safety. Also, having neighbors who watch out for each other.

There's an informal neighborhood group, they have a yearly party.

Setbacks are an important contributor; houses on older streets are often close to the street and close to each other.

Condos at waterfront – its noisy; renters have to be ready to move out in 30 days if the condo is sold.

The condos were over-designed. They are too expensive for people to buy.

Some are used by weekenders only or once a month occupied by owners.

Village apparently doesn't have any restriction on how many of the condos can be rented out simultaneously.

Furnace Street compared to Church Street – Furnace Street is mostly rentals. It is a great street for first time home buyers and self employed people; but there was no unified pressure to correct problems that came up, specifically, prostitution and drug dealing. The village and the police response was very weak and the landlord of the "drug house" didn't do anything.

Question: Does having a rental residential property cause problems? And how does this fit into mixed-use areas?

It comes down to the owners of the building; each is an individual situation.

Question: Do events such as sidewalk fairs encourage a small town atmosphere?

Some at the table said “no”.

Maybe encourage more block parties; they do a lot more than village parades and such.

The village website is making it a lot easier to know where/when events such as parades are being held.

These events have made me feel more connected to the town.

It was suggested that having some Village Board meetings on weekends would allow people who work during the week to attend.

The concept of a block party was brought up as a positive idea.

It was pointed out that some residents of one-way streets drive the wrong way down the street; the residents who do this don't seem to care.

Educating and sensitizing residents is very important.

At the Drug World lot today, 5 cars in a row left speeding

Friendliness, safety, awareness, sensitivity are all elements of village character.

Session 2 – This session was attended by 7 people

1. Walkability

Village residents ensure things are done carefully and thoughtfully and the Village is unique for that.

Sidewalks – add sidewalks to Bank Street where they are missing. Some stretches have no sidewalks on either side.

There are a lot of children now on Parrott and Bank Streets. Bank Street is a very dangerous road. Although there are STOP signs on Bank Street, drivers do not stop at the signs.

Sidewalks are also needed on Fair Street from Riverview north on the west side of the street. This is important because of the use of Mayor's Park and the traffic into and out of Riverview Restaurant.

We'd like light poles and fixtures to be consistent with the age of the street – make the lighting historically appropriate.

There are also problems with the sidewalks being uneven throughout the village.

Would sidewalks detract from the historic nature of the village?

Blacktop sidewalks were even put in on parts of Parrott Street.

Also, on Parrott Street, lots of rain runs off downhill.

Dog droppings are on sidewalks.

There is nothing to hand out to visitors showing a map of the village to encourage visitors to walk the village and the historic districts.

Main Street sidewalks need work. A lot of sidewalks are broken up. Also, stores are putting tables and chairs out on the sidewalks which can create safety problems and it looks disorganized.

Question: What contributes to the positive feelings that residents have about the village?

Neighbors who watch out for each other and for the neighborhood.

Community dinners. St. Mary's puts on a really great dinner, and it is free. The dinners are very nice. Other groups also conduct dinners, for example, Our Lady of Loretto has a Thanksgiving dinner. Food events bring people together.

The Methodist Church once did dinners too but that stopped because there were not enough volunteers.

Publish a list of church dinners as community events with free food but stress the community part of it.

Volunteerism is on the wane.

Question: What can be done to recruit new volunteers?

I don't think that people don't WANT to volunteer, but they don't have the time. Women in the community now often work outside the home, plus they have family and do Girl Scouts and so on.

A central clearinghouse for volunteers would be a great idea.

A community center could do that but it must be accessible; it is part of walkability.

Question: Why is there not greater attendance among older residents at the waterfront concerts?

The nature of the music – it's all rock music.

It is hard for older residents physically to get there especially where there are crowds.

Once there were more community events in Cold Spring – bazaars, dances, carnivals, etc. These have stopped because games-of-chance are no longer legal, insurance costs, etc.

2. Streetscapes:

Boat owners store their boats in their back/side yards. They run their boat motors there, creating noise and pollution.

Many people store their RVs and trailers in their yards as well.

The village needs to do some extensive pruning and dead limb removal on old trees before the Central Hudson people chop up the trees. Maybe the village could have a Tree Officer, someone who knows a lot about trees.

How can Nelsonville keep its old trees on Pine Street?

What about donating trees to the village, maybe with a plaque in memory of someone?

At the Dockside discussion I attended earlier, there were points raised that intersect with topics being discussed concerning the Riverwalk. These discussions should not occur separately; they need to be reconciled. A: It is the responsibility of the Special Board to address these overlapping topics and to come up with a recommendation that considers all input, all the pro's and con's, and to reflect this in the Comprehensive Plan.

When a commercial development recommendation is made, I suggest that it be evaluated in terms of how it will enhance existing commerce/businesses. For example, if a new restaurant is suggested, consider if it will benefit existing restaurants. If it does not, it should be rejected. I make this suggestion based on what has been seen in Beacon vis a vis the Beacon waterfront development draining the businesses on Main Street.

As an alternate to the Riverwalk, consider a boat (something that could navigate shallow waters, something like a barge) taking hikers from Dockside to Little Stony Point.